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ABSTRACT

The implications of restructuring proposals for at risk students are examined in this ninth guidebook in a series of nine video conferences on school restructuring. Contents include a description of four approaches for the identification of at risk students: predictive, descriptive, unilateral, and school factors; a discussion of the relationship between meeting at risk student needs and overall school success; an examination of barriers to academic achievement; and an analysis of alternative approaches and strategies for prioritizing restructuring initiatives. Also included are pre- and post-conference activities, a program evaluation, essays and school-based activities highlighting conference topics, information about other video conferences in the series and computer forums, course credit information and a list of supplementary materials, 69 references, 2 video sources, and 9 regional resources. Biographical information is given on the conference presenters. (LMI)

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RESTRUCTURING TO PROMOTE LEARNING IN AMERICA'S SCHOOLS

A GUIDEBOOK

9 Reconnecting Students at Risk to the Learning Process

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Use of This *Guidebook*

Guidebook Purposes

1. **Before** the video conference, the ***Guidebook*** provides pre-conference activities.

2. **After** the video conference, the ***Guidebook*** contains a post-conference activity and program evaluation.

3. The essay highlights topics discussed during the video conference. It is followed by two sets of activities: one set relates directly to the essay; the other set is school-based.

4. Finally, this ***Guidebook*** provides information about the remaining video conference in the series, the computer forums, course credit, and supplementary materials that are available for this professional development program.

Instructions to the Site Facilitator

Pre-Conference Activities
(Allow 30 minutes.)

Before viewing the video conference:

ASK the participants to introduce themselves. If possible, have them form small groups or pairs.

ASK the participants to complete the **Pre-Conference Activities.** These activities are on page 4 and are identified by the hand/pencil symbol: ✍

Post-Conference Activities
(Allow 30 minutes.)

After viewing the video conference:

ASK the participants to complete the **Post-Conference Activity**. This activity is on page 5 and is also marked by ✍

ASK the participants to complete the Program Evaluation.

ADVISE participants that workshop activities have been included in this ***Guidebook***. These activities may be completed in schools, state education agencies, or other educational facilities.

Video Conference 9

RECONNECTING STUDENTS AT RISK TO THE LEARNING PROCESS

Written by:

Judson Hixson
Margaret Banker Tinzmann

North Central Regional
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Guidebooks and videotapes of these series may be purchased from:

PBS Video
1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 739-5038

Guidebooks and additional information are also available from:

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
295 Emroy Avenue
Elmhurst, IL 60126
(708) 941-7677

NCREL

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory is a nonprofit organization devoted to supporting efforts of the educational community by bridging the gap between research and practice to provide effective instruction for all students. NCREL is primarily funded through the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education. NCREL and PBS have been presenting national video conferences since 1987.

PBS

The PBS Elementary/Secondary Service acquires and distributes high quality, K-12 instructional television programs; provides professional development for educators; delivers electronic and print information services for and about Public Television (PTV) and education; serves as a national advocate for the use of technologies; and tracks developments in national policy for the educational television community.

The PBS Adult Learning Service (ALS) offers college-credit television courses through local partnerships of public television stations and colleges. Since 1981 more than 1,500 colleges, in cooperation with 300 stations, have enrolled over one million students in ALS-distributed courses. In August 1988 ALS launched the PBS Adult Learning Satellite Service (ALSS) as a direct satellite service for higher education, offering a wide variety of programming.

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OVERVIEW: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

NCREL's Goal: A Forum on Restructuring Schools

The concept of educational laboratories emerged during the War on Poverty in the 1960s. Education was viewed as crucial to anti-poverty efforts, but the inability of policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to communicate with one another about effective strategies and practices was a significant obstacle to substantial educational improvement. One of the reasons Congress created the laboratories was to promote dialogue about promising practices among these diverse actors. Today there are nine federally funded regional educational laboratories in the country working to help educators and policymakers improve the quality of education by applying research findings to educational practice.

NCREL sees telecommunications as an effective vehicle for creating a forum on restructuring schools that brings together practitioners, policymakers, and researchers so that they can enrich each other's perspectives. Telecommunications can bridge geographic separations and create networks of common stakeholders in restructuring efforts.

However, the satellite transmission itself does not create a forum. How the telecommunications event is structured is a crucial factor in determining the effectiveness of the forum. This professional development series was designed to:

- Focus the movement for restructuring schools on the fundamental issues of schooling: learning, curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Provide opportunities for participants to interact with researchers, teachers and administrators, and policymakers in a structured thinking process
- Help apply new ideas and develop local expertise
- Promote a broad range of local and electronic networking
- Help educators prepare students to meet the new roles and opportunities of a profoundly changed and changing society
- Provide a framework for organizing what research says about fundamental change

Components of the Professional Development Series

Four components of this professional development series enhance the potential for creating a national forum:

1. Video conferences
2. Computer forums
3. Print materials
4. College credit

See Additional Information, page 46.

Video Conference Titles and Dates (1990)

1. The New Definition of Learning: The First Step for School Reform (February 14)
2. The Thinking Curriculum (March 21)
3. The Collaborative Classroom: Reconnecting Teachers and Learners (April 26)
4. Multidimensional Assessment: Strategies for Schools (May 24)
5. Schools as Learning Communities (June 6)
6. Many Roads to Fundamental Reform: Getting Started (June 20)
7. Many Roads to Fundamental Reform: Continuing the Journey (July 11)
8. The Meaning of Professional Development in the 2lst Century (July 25)
9. Reconnecting Students at Risk to the Learning Process (August 8)

Content

The core message of the video series is this: A fundamental restructuring of schools should be driven by a new vision of learning, a vision which transforms all dimensions of schooling. Thus, the first video conference focuses on the new research on learning. The next three video conferences discuss the cognitive and social environments that can be created in classrooms to support meaningful learning. The last five video conferences explore changes that can be made in the social organization of schools to support these classrooms.

VIDEO CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

Pre-Conference Activities

Post-Conference Activity

Pre-Conference Activities

INSTRUCTIONS TO SITE FACILITATOR:

ASK the audience to form groups of 3 to 5 people. GUIDE them through the Pre-Conference Activities.

Activity 1: Who are the at-risk students? (Allow 15 minutes.)

With a partner or group, write your definition of at-risk students.

Activity 2: What questions do you expect this video conference to answer about at-risk students? (Allow 15 minutes.)

WRITE questions you would like this video conference to answer about at-risk students.

Post-Conference Activity

INSTRUCTIONS TO SITE FACILITATOR:

ASK the audience to form groups of 3 to 5 people. GUIDE them through the Post-Conference Activity.

Activity: Has this video conference answered your questions about at-risk students?

REVIEW the questions you wrote before the video conference. WRITE any answers this video conference provided for you and ways you might seek answers for questions you still have. SHARE your answers and potential sources for answers with a partner or group if possible.

WRITE new questions you now have about at-risk students. WRITE some ways you might seek answers to these new questions. SHARE your questions and potential sources for answers with a partner or group if possible.

Program Evaluation

Please fill in the appropriate circles on your answer sheet using a #2 pencil and return it to your site facilitator. (Or send to: Debra Beauprez, 295 Emroy Avenue, Elmhurst, IL 60126.)

On Section A of the **Special Codes** section on your answer sheet please fill in your state : 1 = IL; 2 = IN; 3 = IA; 4 = MI; 5 = MN; 6 = OH; 7 = WI; 8 = OTHER STATE; 9 = OUTSIDE U.S.

PART ONE: Your opinions about the relevance and usefulness of the video conference

	Strongly Disagree <——> Strongly Agree
1. The topic of this video conference is relevant to my needs and interests.	A B C D E
2. The content of the video conference is appropriate to the type of community I live in and its schools.	A B C D E
3. I learned a great deal from this video conference.	A B C D E
4. The video conference enriched the way I look at education.	A B C D E
5. The video conference may influence the way I educate (or involve myself in education as a parent or community member).	A B C D E

PART TWO: Questions about activities before, during, and after the video conference

6. I am participating in this video conference:
   A - Alone
   B - With colleagues (not in a team)
   C - In a school-based team
   D - In a district team
   E - Other

7. Did the site facilitator conduct a **pre-conference** activity?
   A - Yes
   B - No

8. Did you participate in a pre-conference activity?
   A - Yes
   B - No

9. Did the site facilitator conduct a **post-conference** activity?
   A - Yes
   B - No

10. Did you participate in a post-conference activity?
    A - Yes
    B - No

11. How many other video conferences in the series have you participated in?
    A - 0
    B - 1-2
    C - 3-4
    D - 5-6
    E - 7-8

14

IF you have viewed previous video conferences, please indicate the follow-up activities 12-17 that you have completed. If you have NOT viewed previous video conferences, please skip down to question #18.

12. Read previous ***Guidebooks.*** A - Yes B - No

13. Participated in post-conference activities in the ***Guidebooks.*** A - Yes B - No

14. Read ***Selected Readings***. A - Yes B - No

15. Discussed issues and content presented at the video conference with colleagues. A - Yes B - No

16. Actively applied the content and ideas presented in my work setting. A - Yes B - No

17. OTHER (Use the space marked "comment #1" on your answer sheet.)

PART THREE: Your opinions about the content and delivery of the video conference

Too Short <——————————> Too Long

18. How would you judge the overall length of the video conference? A B C D E

Too Little <——————————> Too Much

19. How would you evaluate the amount of information presented in the video conference? A B C D E

Please evaluate the following components or aspects of the video conference (questions 19-28):

Poor <——————————> Excellent

20. Pre-conference activity A B C D E
21. The video conference itself A B C D E
22. Post-conference activity A B C D E
23. Presentations A B C D E
24. Interaction with presenters A B C D E
25. Pre-taped segments A B C D E
26. Interaction with video conference participants at your site A B C D E

	Strongly Disagree <——— Strongly Agree ———>
27. The technical quality of the video conference was good.	A B C D E
28. The video conference site was conducive to learning.	A B C D E
29. I would recommend this video series to others.	A B C D E

PART FOUR: Information about you

30. **Educators Only:** Please indicate your school category on your answer sheet.
A - Elementary school/junior high
B - High school
C - District
D - College/University
E - State/Intermediate Agency

31. **Educators Only:** Please indicate on your answer sheet your position.
A - Teacher
B - Administrator
C - Staff
D - Professor

32. **Non-Educators Only:** Please indicate the primary group you represent.
A - Parents
B - Community
C - School Board
D - Business
E - Social Services

33. Circle the best description of your district.
A - Urban
B - Suburban
C - Rural

34. Did you view this video conference at a live site?
A - Yes
B - No

35. How long did it take you to get to the video conference site?
A - 0-15 minutes
B - 16-30 minutes
C - 31 minutes to 1 hour
D - 1 hour to 1-1/2 hours
E - more than 1-1/2 hours

36. Do you plan to use videotapes of the video conferences and the Guidebooks during the 1990-91 school year?
A - Yes
B - No

37. Please characterize your institution's plans to use tapes of the video conferences and the ***Guidebooks*** during the 1990-91 school year?
A) No plans
B) Staff will be encouraged to use the tapes and ***Guidebooks*** on their own.
C) The tapes and ***Guidebooks*** will be used as part of my institution's staff development plan.
D) The tapes and ***Guidebooks*** will be used as part of my institution's restructuring plan.
E) Other

38. Please share any other comments about the video conference and suggestions for future video conferences.
(Use the section marked "comment #2" on your answer sheet.)

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Essay

RECONNECTING STUDENTS AT RISK TO THE LEARNING PROCESS

Who Are the "At-Risk" Students of the 1990s?

Why Is There a Need to Focus Especially on At-Risk Students?

What Are the Systemic Barriers for At-Risk Students?

How Do We Construct Effective Educational Environments for All Students?

Who Are the "At-Risk" Students of the 1990s?

Introduction

Throughout this series we have addressed critical dimensions of the restructuring process. The first five programs addressed structural issues: new goals or definitions for learning, the content and organization of the curriculum, collaborative methods for instruction, multidimensional strategies for assessment, and creating schools that are true learning communities. The next three programs focused on strategies for initiating, nurturing, and sustaining these structural changes, and the critical importance of professional development as the foundation on which new models for schooling will be built. Collectively, these dimensions form a framework of strategic priorities for the types of fundamental changes we believe are necessary to prepare today's schools and students to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

In this last program, however, we turn our attention to the special implications of these proposals for the growing number of students for whom the traditional approaches to organizing and delivering instruction have worked least well--those students most "at risk" of not completing or benefiting from their elementary and secondary experiences. It is, after all, primarily the failure of schools, as they are currently organized, to successfully educate this portion of the student population that has caused us to become "a nation at risk."

In this essay, we address four areas that call for special attention to ensure that the restructuring agenda presented in this series results in schools that first, reflect the belief that *all students can learn*, and second, take it as their primary responsibility to ensure that they do.

We begin by addressing the question of who are today's "at-risk" students? Next we discuss the reasons for focusing priority attention on the needs of these students. In the third section, we examine the often unintended, but no less problematic, barriers to school achievement that have placed increasing numbers of students at risk. Fourth, we look at alternative approaches and strategies for focusing and prioritizing school restructuring and improvement initiatives.

Current Trends and Approaches

The issue of definition is an important and necessary first step in both understanding and developing solutions to the problems faced by at-risk students. However, the process of defining who is at risk and why is a highly controversial one.

Historically, "at-risk" students were primarily those whose appearance, language, culture, values, communities, and family structures did not match those of the dominant white culture that schools were designed to serve and support. These students--primarily minorities, the poor, and immigrants--were considered culturally or educationally disadvantaged or deprived. As it became obvious that large numbers of these students were not achieving at minimally acceptable levels, "it seemed natural and certainly easy to define the problem as arising from deficiencies in the students themselves" (Goodlad & Keating, 1990).

More recently, the tendency to blame school failure simply on characteristics of the students, their communities, or their families has diminished, or is at least less overt. Moreover, the terminology we use has changed and is generally less pejorative (though some continue to use the term "educationally disadvantaged," e.g., Natriello et al., 1990). At the same time, the need to identify that portion of the student population most consistently experiencing school-related problems remains an important priority.

In spite of these changes, the issue of definition remains one of the most controversial aspects of the national discussion about at-risk students because it reveals continuing ideological and philosophical divisions among educators, policymakers, and the general public about the role and responsibility of schools, families, and students themselves. Currently, there are four general approaches to defining at-risk students used by most schools and policymakers, each of which has their own limitations.

Predictive Approach

Students who have certain kinds of conditions such as living with one parent, being a member of a minority group, have limited English proficiency, and so on, are defined as at risk because, statistically, students in these categories are more likely to be among the lowest achievement groups or drop out of school altogether. This approach and the descriptive approach described below are the most commonly used strategies for defining the at-risk student population. The predictive approach has the advantage of being relatively straightforward and uses information already available from schools or other agencies. In addition, this approach is based on an early intervention philosophy for preventing rather than remediating academic and related school problems.

However, this approach is also based on a deficit model of students, their families and communities, and rarely leads to any examination of fundamental aspects of the school (Natriello et al., 1990). More often, reliance on this approach leads even compassionate and well-meaning educators and policymakers to devise programs to identify the various ways in which children need to be changed in order to fit into existing school structures and programs (Goodlad & Keating, 1990). Even more problematic, this early categorizing of students often has the effect of simply lowering teachers' expectations of what students have the potential to achieve. The phrase "what can you expect from these types of students" continues to be heard throughout too many schools and classrooms. Lastly, use of such categorical indicators often places students in the position of being blamed for poor school performance on the basis of characteristics over which they have no control (Richardson & Colfer, 1990).

Descriptive Approach

Students who are already performing poorly or failing in school are at risk because they have not been able to successfully take advantage of the "regular" school program and will likely fall further behind or drop out. This approach reflects a monitoring/intervention strategy. In attempting to get away from the use of predisposing indicators, this approach waits until school-related problems occur and then identifies the student as at risk. A major difficulty with this approach, however, is that identification of a student's problems often occurs after a pattern of poor performance, and the expectations of both teachers and students that it will continue have become severe enough to make successful intervention/remediation less likely. In addition, even if problems are identified early, the typical intervention involves ancillary programs that (a) do not promote changes in the "regular" program, (b) intensify the impact of negative labeling and isolation of less successful students from important peer role models and support systems, and (c) tend to slow down student progress and thereby exacerbate the degree to which students fall behind and further diminish their belief that they will ever "catch up" (Levin, undated).

Unilateral Approach

With the increase in the number and complexity of problems faced by today's youth, all students are at risk in one way or another. On the one hand, this approach is attractive because first, it addresses egalitarian ideals and values and second, it allays the fears of many parents, educators, and policymakers that disproportionate attention is being paid to poorly performing students at the expense of both the most gifted and the average students.

However, though the logic is seductive, it ignores the urgent need to focus attention on those students for whom structural and organizational impediments in the current model of schooling have most often and most consistently resulted in unacceptable levels of academic and intellectual development, whether the students finish school or not. We must be mindful of the axioms that to treat people equally does not mean that they should be treated the same, and that in most arenas of life, we focus our attention and resources on those areas in which there are the greatest problems and need. In a hospital emergency room, for example, one might assume that all patients are in need of attention and treatment. However, there is an important and necessary distinction made between those who have headaches and those who are hemorrhaging. The emergency room maxim that patients will be treated in order of medical need is not a perfect analogy, but one that is nonetheless relevant and instructive in this discussion.

School Factors

In addition to these predominant strategies for defining or identifying which students are at risk, there is an emerging body of research that looks at school factors as potential causes of "at-riskness" (Richardson & Colfer, 1990). School characteristics that have been identified as hindering the academic achievement of many students include inflexible schedules; narrow curricula; a priority focus on basic/lower-order skills; inappropriate, limited, and rigid instructional strategies; inappropriate texts and other instructional materials; overreliance on standardized tests to make instructional and curricular decisions; tracking; isolated pull-out programs; and teacher and administrators' beliefs and attitudes toward both students and their parents. Though few state or district level policies use analysis of school factors to allocate resources or develop programmatic interventions for at-risk students, attention to the relationship between school factors and student success is increasingly reflected in the more general policies regarding overall school improvement and restructuring at both the state and district levels, as well as among national organizations such as the National Governors' Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the American Association of School Administrators, and the National School Board Association, among others.

This approach has the desirable characteristics of not blaming poor academic achievement on circumstances or characteristics over which students have little, if any, control and of not absolving schools of their obligations to provide nurturing and effective educational environments for all students--not just those that reflect an ideal or model student. However, though we think that it is the primary responsibility of the schools to design programs that meet the needs of the students they have, making the school solely accountable for responding to conditions in students' lives over which they have little control similarly absolves students of any personal responsibility for their own achievement. Making the school solely accountable also absolves parents of any responsibility for supporting and participating as partners in support of the school's efforts on behalf of their children.

A Working Description

The preceding discussion has outlined the benefits and drawbacks of four approaches to defining who is at risk and why. How then do we merge these perspectives into a coherent and meaningful strategy to guide both policy and practice? We take our lead in this endeavor from the work of Richardson and Colfer (1990), Natriello et al. (1990), and Chubb and Moe (1990), as well as from our own work at the Laboratory in studying circumstances, contexts, and interventions for students at risk.

First, we believe that the degree to which a student, or group of students, may be at risk of imminent or future educational failure cannot be adequately determined by the simple existence of one or more predetermined characteristics of the students themselves, their families, or the schools they attend. The predictive probability model that underlies these approaches relies on too high a level of generalization to provide the direct guidance needed to develop specific interventions in individual schools, classrooms, or communities. Similarly, we believe that the ancillary or isolated program approach that is the basis for most current policies and programs, while potentially successful for limited numbers of students, does little to alter the circumstances or patterns of practice that allow poor performance in schools or classrooms as a whole to continue.

Third, we believe that there is a compelling case to be made for moving away from a preoccupation with categorizing or labeling students (Ghory, 1988) or finding the proper person, group, or institution to "blame." Instead, we need approaches that provide a more meaningful data base and perspective for planning new, holistic, integrated, and systemic alterations in the norms of schooling.

We suggest, therefore, an "ecological" approach that recognizes education as a process that takes place both inside and outside the school itself and is, therefore, affected *(as opposed to determined)* by (a) the social and academic organization of the school, (b) the personal and background characteristics/ circumstances of students and their families, (c) the community contexts within which students, families, and schools exist, and (d) the relationship of each of these factors to the others (Natriello et al., 1990; Richardson & Colfer, 1990).

In this view then, the degree to which students are "at risk" is a function of inadequacies in one or more of these arenas that are not compensated for in the others, or a mismatch between the requirements and expectations in one arena and the ability of other arenas to respond to them. From this perspective, one does not simply define or describe at-risk students, but more appropriately, one regards as at risk the combined characteristics of educational environments taken as a whole in which a significant proportion of students are consistently unsuccessful. As Richardson and Colfer (1990) note:

> The responsibility for the at-risk status of a child, therefore, does not reside in one individual — be it the child, mother, or teacher — or in one institution — the school. Society creates schools in certain ways to meet its goals and expectations, thus creating environments in which certain children are at risk. The solution to the at-riskness of children and youth, then lies with us all (p. 110).

Why Is There a Need to Focus Especially on At-Risk Students?

We believe there are seven basic reasons why special attention to the problem of at-risk children and youth is not only important, but essential, to the long-term success of the broader and more general drive to restructure schools.

Quality and equality Findings by Goodlad (1979, 1984) and others underscore the need for a new priority in the school reform agenda that recognizes that true educational quality and equality are inseparable. In his book, *A Place Called School*, Goodlad noted the continuing denial of equal access to knowledge for all students in nominally desegregated schools. There is a similar

danger if restructuring efforts are driven only by the normative needs of students as a whole without specific and overt attention to the particular needs of those students who have historically been least well-served by most public schools.

Escalation of the problem Each year, increasing numbers of students are entering schools from circumstances and with needs that schools are not prepared (or in some cases are unwilling) to accommodate. As Brown (1986) notes, this requires that increased understanding and sensitivity to these new contexts for schooling become a more integral part of the national dialogue about educational reform than is currently the case.

Demands of the work force The combined trends of a decreasing proportion of youth and increasing educational requirements for jobs at all levels require us to ensure that a significantly larger percentage of students attain higher levels of intellectual skills and knowledge if we are to continue to be a first-level participant in the world economy.

Social development A significant number of social problems are, at least in part, the result of inadequate education. As noted in the National Coalition of Advocates for Children's 1988 report, "The failure to educate millions of children is turning the potential for social profit into grave deficit, the cost of which American taxpayers will bear both financially and socially, in terms of increased dependency and the loss of a common sense of purpose." Society, therefore, can avoid more costly problems in the future by investing more heavily in the development of all of its youth today (Ogden and Germinario, 1988, p. xvii).

New role of the school Changing societal realities and expectations now require that schools attend to issues that were traditionally addressed by families and other community institutions. This is particularly evident in the increasing number of young parents who were themselves unsuccessful in school and, therefore, need additional support and assistance to support their own children's educational efforts.

Restrictive attitudes toward student capabilities Though attitudes are changing, there still remain a large number of educators as well as policymakers and members of the general public who believe that school failure can be primarily attributed to characteristics of students and their families. An NEA study, for example, found that while most teachers attributed the much reported success of Asian students to hard work, they attributed the failure of American minorities (primarily Blacks and Hispanics) to lack of capability. As noted by Sinclair and Ghory (1987), too many educators have become satisfied with not reaching certain students. They go on to note that, in response to calls for excellence for all students, they [educators] exhibit a "curious resentment, as if they were trying to protect those students who can learn under current conditions from those who can't or won't." This circumstance often permits reformers to implement changes in schools without ensuring that conditions exist that would allow more children to succeed.

Legal responsibilities Lastly, it is important that, in designing strategies for school restructuring, educators and others are mindful that providing equitable education for all students is also a legal requirement. Titles VI, IX, and Section 504 of the Civil Rights Act all provide broad-reaching standards for complying with equity and non-discrimination aspects of the law as it applies to education.

For these reasons, as well as others not explored here, we believe that concern for those students at the margins of public schooling must be at the center of the debate on how best to restructure the schools they attend. It is vital to reconnect them and their parents to revitalized and more meaningful instructional opportunities and to regain their faith in the importance of education to both their futures as well as our own.

What Are the Systemic Barriers for At-Risk Students?

We have talked thus far in this essay about conditions, contexts, and rationales for understanding the need to create educational environments that reduce the risk of educational failure for all students. A part of that process is to establish the environments and practices that will accomplish that goal. However, as Asa Hilliard indicated in an interview for Video Conference 9, an equally important part of the process is the identification and elimination of current barriers to educational success for all students, particularly those who are not currently succeeding on a consistent basis.

Our point of reference for this discussion is the report, Barriers to Excellence: Our Children at Risk (National Coalition of Advocates for Children [NCAC], 1988). In that national study, researchers identified three major categories of barriers that were regularly associated with poor performance by "those children who have shared least in the material benefits, and economic opportunities of our society . . . ." We include these barriers in this essay because they reflect a comprehensive agenda of issues to be considered by those concerned with understanding current inequities in their schools and classrooms as a precursor or foundation for developing more fundamental changes and innovations.

1. Discrimination and Differential Treatment

Even though today's schools enroll far more racial, linguistic, and cultural minorities, and more students who are poor, or who have handicapping conditions than ever before, "the education of too many of these students is characterized by low expectations, inferior resources, and differential treatment. The doors to schools have been opened, but hanging above those doors are signs that say: 'Enter at your own risk. You may not belong here.'" (NCAC, 1988).

Such discrimination and differential treatment on the basis of socioeconomic class, race, culture, and sex remains the norm in many schools--not necessarily by intent, but certainly by inattention and by results. It is not simply a matter of theoretical equity of access, but practical opportunities to participate in all that the school has to offer, including the provision of support to do so when necessary. Reducing the risk of educational failure for all students requires that educators at all levels must become proactive in rooting out subtle forms of differential treatment.

2. Structural and Programmatic Barriers

Among the principal barriers to full participation by all students in everything that the school has to offer are:

- Inflexible school structures and schedules based more on history and inertia than student or family needs
- Abuses of tracking and ability grouping that often serve simply to separate students on the basis of perceived differences in ability, interest, or potential rather than to promote improved educational attainment
- Misuses of testing where tests become more vehicles for sorting students or allocating rewards and benefits than a data base for program planning
- Narrowness of curriculum and teaching practices allow many students to become frustrated and disconnected from the basic instructional activities of the school
- Lack of support services for youth reflects a lack of understanding on the part of many educators of (1) the clear and direct connection between students' life circumstances and their interest or ability to participate in any meaningful way in the school's instructional or other programs and (2) the vested interests of the school in seeing that students' personal, emotional, and social needs are addressed
- Lack of early childhood programs similarly reflect the unwillingness of many educators and policymakers to invest in prevention initiatives rather than remediation programs that could be made unnecessary
- Finally, lack of democratic governance, coupled with cumbersome and generally inefficient bureaucracies in most schools and districts, serves to further isolate and alienate those parents and community residents who need most to be involved in intimate partnerships with their children's schools — both for their children's benefit and their own.

3. The Societal Context: Declining Support for Schools, Children, and Families

As the demographics and economic stratification of society change, so, too, does the public's interest and willingness to support schools for "other people's" children or for services for the increasing number of youth with various social, personal, emotional, or for that matter, health-related needs.

Overall, insufficient funding has severely diminished the options that many schools serving large numbers of at-risk students are able to provide, for example, as the report notes, chemistry in most inner-city schools as compared to their suburban counterparts is a drastically different course of study. This circumstance is further aggravated by the increasing disparity of resources available to students in different school districts. While these broad issues of educational funding are generally beyond the purview of individual schools, local schools can in fact be instrumental in reversing the public mood of cynicism and lack of faith in public education by establishing more inclusive and broad-based partnerships with both individuals and institutions in the school's community.

Again, these barriers do not necessarily reflect the intent of educators or policymakers to isolate certain students from the mainstream of educational opportunities. Instead, they reflect historic societal patterns of who should, or needs to, receive what type of education; racial and class discrimination; and the lack of a compelling reason to change well-established and familiar—if not productive—patterns of behavior.

We believe, however, that today there are sufficiently compelling reasons to re-examine the manner in which schools are organized and the rationales that support it. As Phillip Schlechty notes in Video Conference 8, we can make great strides forward if we simply stop doing what we know doesn't work. Eliminating current barriers to school success is a good starting point for that process.

How Do We Construct Effective Educational Environments for All Students?

The development of school environments that meet the needs of all students is based first on acceptance of the fact that, for the most part, traditional approaches have failed to change substantively overall patterns of student achievement. In most schools, those categories of students who have performed least well as a whole, generally continue to do so. School-based educators and district or state level policymakers should understand, however, that such an admission is not an indictment, but rather simply a recognition that current organizational structures and patterns of practice are not matched to the needs of the school's current students. Therefore, a change is in order--no more, no less. Open acceptance of this reality, however, is a necessary prerequisite for initiating the other changes that will be necessary to establish a more broadly successful educational environment.

As we view it, this process involves four strategic initiatives: (a) redefining the cultural norms of the school, (b) refocusing the content, methods, and priorities of the instructional program, (c) attending to the personal/affective needs of students and staff, and (d) establishing new relationships between the school and students' homes and the broader school community. In each case, we are not proposing strategies different from, or in place of, the dimensions for restructuring that have been discussed in the previous eight video conferences. Instead, these initiatives form a framework of priorities to focus implementation of those more general approaches in areas most critical to reconnecting students currently at risk and preventing future students from following in their path. These, then, become areas of priority on which to focus rather than a new agenda for schools or districts.

Redefining the Cultural Norms of the School

While there are numerous elements that comprise a school's culture, there are several that are of particular relevance to both reconnecting at-risk students and reducing the likelihood of failure for all students--current and future. First, and most important, is the issue of redefining the standards by which school staff and the broader school community measure success. More specifically, the following are examples of the types of indicators of success or progress that schools might include in an annual "state-of-the-school" report to the staff and community:

- The school's success in reducing the percentage of students represented in the lowest 40 percent or stanines 1-4 on nationally normed standardized tests.

- A survey of student and parent attitudes toward the school in terms of the quality of educational and related services provided; the frequency and usefulness of communications between teachers and students, and the school and parents (including parents who do not speak English or have limited English fluency); and the degree to which both students and parents understand the instructional goals of the school and their roles and responsibilities in helping to achieve them

- An assessment of the degree to which students from all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, and of both sexes are actively involved in all of the school's educational and extracurricular activities

- A report on patterns of attendance and the school's initiatives to retrieve regularly absent or truant students

- An assessment of the degree to which students with special support needs (e.g., special education, physically disabled, limited English fluency, etc.) are integrated into the general educational program

Second is the idea of valuing all students. Examples here include: (a) ensuring that the images and symbols throughout the school reflect the membership, participation, and contribution of **all** "categories" of students, (b) sensitizing all staff, visitors, and students to the importance of the language used to describe the staff, students, parents, who are part of the school family, and the community in which the school is located, (c) reflecting in the patterns of dialogue and planning the assumption and expectation that all students can learn whatever the school has decided it is important, or is required, to teach, and (d) reflecting in ceremonies, celebrations, and traditions the value, involvement, and diversity of all students in the school. In many cases this means that some existing traditions and ceremonies may need to be altered. Some schools, for example, have moved to presenting, at school-wide rallies, school letters to students who have overcome the greatest obstacles, while athletic letters are presented in smaller, less visible ceremonies. Others, such as Tongue River Middle School in Ranchester, Wyoming, have adopted an athletic policy that all students who try out and come to practice may play in every game — regardless of their level of competence. Inclusive participation has replaced "winning" as a value and tradition in the school.

Third, the culture of the school encourages and supports the active involvement of all students, parents, and members of the community in supporting and participating in the instructional program. Peer tutoring; parents as tutors, role models, and resource persons; community service projects; adult education courses and seminars; and home visits by all school staff are just some of the ways of creating a culture of participation, belonging, and involvement across the entire school community.

Refocusing Instructional Content, Strategies, and Priorities

A positive, nurturing, and inclusive school culture is a necessary, but not wholly sufficient, condition for educational success. In the final analysis, it is the instructional experiences to which students are exposed and in which they become involved that determine the success or failure of their schooling. The following discussion describes instructional practices that are particularly important for establishing an instructional success model for students who have not been successful in traditional classroom environments.

As discussed in ***Guidebook 8***, a prerequisite for establishing contexts for academic success is that school staff must be comfortable and confident with respect to the apparent diversity these students bring to the classroom. Indeed, diversity can become an exciting resource for all students to learn new ideas, world views, ways of processing information, and so forth. Diversity can be tapped in new curricula and instructional approaches that are guided by increased awareness of the importance of the history, culture, patterns of experience, and contributions of the diverse groups that comprise American society.

A second prerequisite is to recognize the key role of school practice in assuring (or hindering) student success. This prerequisite moves us away from a "blame the victim" attitude about being at risk toward becoming stronger advocates for these at-risk students.

We have maintained throughout this video series that the foundation for school practices ought to be the school's vision of learning. A new vision of learning is especially critical for at-risk students. School learning that is responsive to our information society ought to ensure that students will be able actively construct knowledge, solve problems and make decisions, collaborate with fellow learners and workers, and pursue learning throughout their lives--these are new "basic skills". At-risk students need to attain these goals of learning if they are to develop fully as individuals and to function as contributing citizens in our society. To attain these goals, students at risk need to participate fully in a thinking curriculum, be members of classrooms where collaboration is the usual mode of interaction and learning, and participate in assessment practices that tap their multiple abilities and strengths and at the same contribute to their learning. Each of these is discussed briefly below. (Refer to ***Guidebooks 2***, ***3***, and ***4***, for full treatment of these topics.)

A thinking curriculum (as described in ***Guidebook 2***) is based on a dual agenda of teaching both content and process. Higher-order thinking pervades the entire elementary and secondary curriculum. It is no longer adequate for students to simply master isolated skills or facts as ends in and of themselves--as catalogues of factual information to be memorized and stored for future recall. If schools are to become "learning communities," the collaborative, interpersonal, and intellectual skills needed to support them must become part of the curriculum for <u>all</u> students, especially students at risk. New guidelines from professional organizations stress these characteristics. Without exception, they also recognize that all students, including those traditionally kept from experiencing the general curriculum, are, with appropriate instruction, able to participate fully in such a curriculum. Appropriate instruction for these students would emphasize explicit teaching of learning and thinking strategies. Teachers would also need to make special efforts to help these students make connections between academic content and students' prior knowledge and experience. These special efforts should not be provided in pull-out programs, but in the regular classroom. Furthermore, it is not enough to provide a thinking curriculum for at-risk students only in pull-out programs if they return to classrooms that teach "old," industrial-age curriculum.

If there are profound changes implied from the new definition of learning and the thinking curriculum, there are equally significant implications for instruction. Many state and local guidelines stress collaboration. Collaborative teachers engage in such roles as facilitating, mediating, modeling, guiding, assisting, sharing, listening, and adjusting. Teachers who collaborate with students help them set their own learning goals and guide them toward self-regulation and self-assessment of their own learning. Goal setting, self-regulation, and self-assessment are particularly important for at-risk students since they may not have learned these skills. These skills especially can empower at-risk students in the academic world.

Moreover, such teachers usually value diversity in their classrooms and they prefer heterogenous groups of students. They view tracking in secondary schools and ability grouping in elementary schools as hindrances to collaboration and meaningful learning and thinking. Instead of separating students, collaborative teachers assess and build on the personal, cultural, and social strengths that students bring to their classrooms, and assist them in learning how to build on those foundations to develop new skills and knowledge. Collaborative learning, where students engage in genuine collaboration with their teachers and with each other, is the usual mode of accomplishing academic work.

Finally, it makes little sense to design thinking curricula and promote high-level collaboration among students if assessment instruments measure primarily the accumulation of isolated facts and performance of lower-order intellectual skills. Alternative assessment methods are being developed to evaluate and promote higher-order thinking, use of and reflection about learning strategies, and multiple intelligences traditionally ignored in school. These new assessments recognize the value of assessing real performances in real contexts rather than exclusively using paper-and-pencil tests. At-risk students are often over-tested and ought to benefit especially from these revolutionary approaches to assessment.

An example should illustrate some of the major points made in this section. In the fall of 1990, Dr. Weyman Patterson, Math Coordinator for Atlanta's Public Schools, will oversee implementation of the Algebra Project in seven of Atlanta's middle schools. Robert Moses customized the project using Atlanta's subway system as a basis for learning algebra.

Failure in 8th grade algebra classes has prevented 90 percent of Atlanta's students--most of them from minority groups--from taking geometry and calculus and pursuing careers where math skills are needed. The Algebra Project will provide all 6th graders with a conceptual base for thinking algebraically rather than arithmetically. For example, when students think of "number" they will ask "In what direction?" as well as "How many?" Seventh and eighth graders will study algebra and prepare for the college prep math sequence.

What distinguishes the Algebra Project from other math curricula is that students learn natural uses of math by confronting real-life concrete situations and moving toward abstract concepts to describe them. Thus, the project reflects National Council of Teachers of Mathematics curriculum standards that at all levels, math consists of problem solving, communication, and reasoning.

Teachers are being trained by participating in the same process they will use with students. Not only are they learning algebraic concepts such as equivalence, equality, and displacement, but they are also learning the five-step process whereby such concepts are internalized: Students begin with physical events such as taking subway trips. Then, in the modeling phase, students might draw pictures of experiences. Third, working in groups, students describe the physical events in their own language. Next, student dialogue provides some structure to the language; for example, by attaining consensus in collaborative groups, students define a trip in a structured way (i.e., it starts at certain place, ends at certain place, has a certain number of stops, and has a direction.) Students use these definitional concepts to build equations when dealing with questions such as "What are equivalent trips?" Finally, students create symbols to represent concepts in the equations.

Attending to the Personal/Affective Needs of Students and Staff

While it is clear that close interpersonal relationships between students and staff are an important element in any successful instructional relationship, for at-risk students such relationships are essential. For many at-risk students, their self-concept and sense of confidence derives largely from their relationships with others. Teachers and other school staff, therefore, are primary sources through which they make judgments about themselves as learners and about their potential to be successful in educational environments. In addition, because many at-risk students come from dysfunctional home environments, school staff may well be the only competent and caring adults with whom they have regular contact.

Beyond these interpersonal relationships, however, at-risk students are more likely to have a wide variety of personal circumstances which can interfere with their ability to give full attention to educational matters. It is critical, therefore, that schools establish either in-house student support teams or collaborative relationships with other social service agencies that can work with students to resolve non-school problems. One example of this is the concept of the school as the "hub-of-the-network" which brokers a wide array of services (e.g., the Corporate Community School of Chicago). School may also be the location at which various human, health care, and social services are delivered (e.g., the Cities-In-School programs across the country). Both concepts provide models for how schools can address the personal problems and needs of their students. Such collaborative or holistic approaches also maintain the students' perception of the school as a valuable resource in their life and as a place in which they are cared about, nurtured, and supported.

Similarly, staff who are expected to be responsive to more than students' educational needs must also have access to ancillary support services. Classroom teachers can be expected to be sensitive and responsive to students' needs and circumstances. But it is unreasonable to expect that teachers can mediate or solve the myriad problems with which they will likely be confronted. Accordingly, professional and personal support must be as available to staff as it is to students. In addition, staff must develop broader collaborative relationships and responsibilities for the educational success and personal nurturing of their students. The priority must be development of a schoolwide network in support of student success. For schools with significant numbers of at-risk students, the needs are likely to be too great to be reasonably managed by individual classroom teachers, and if the school functions as a true community, they should not have to be.

The challenge, therefore, is to create a network of professionals, both within and outside the school, who work together to ensure that students' non-school problems are addressed and that ensuring their educational success is a shared responsibility of the entire school family.

Establishing New Relationships Beyond the School

In Video Conference 5 of this series, we explored at some length the concept of schools as central institutions in a network of people, agencies, and institutions in the broader school community. In communities where a significant portion of the students would traditionally be classified as "at-risk," such networks become more than desirable--they become essential. Schools must assume new leadership roles and responsibilities in developing a community-wide ethic that supports educational attainment as a value to be acknowledged, rewarded, and reinforced. As catalysts for change, school staff can provide important leadership to community agencies and organizations, informal neighborhood groups, and individual community leaders to develop activities that support and complement the educational and related efforts of the school.

Such leadership might include provision of adult education or parenting classes for students' parents or other community adults; training volunteers from a senior citizens' home to be tutors for primary students; helping local churches work with parents to organize after-school homework centers for "latchkey" children; or even developing parent telephone networks that can transmit information about homework assignments, school events, or other important issues.

In this vision of schools as mediators on behalf of students' academic and non-academic needs, the basic roles and responsibilities of the institution change and move far beyond traditional boundaries. This means that school will need to be both organized and staffed differently and that allocation of resources must reflect a broader array of priorities than is typical in most schools today.

A Final Comment

In this essay, we have proposed a wide assortment of alternatives to the manner in which most school organize and manage their affairs. We make these proposals mindful of the already complex world in which school and staff work and the growing number of roles and responsibilities they are expected to assume. However, we also make these suggestions not so much with regard to the magnitude of change that will be required, but with a clear understanding of the consequences if we do not make them.

In the final analysis then, this essay is not so much a blueprint as it is a stimulus for considering new alternatives and strategies for meeting the needs of that growing population of at-risk students whom we will meet not only in our classrooms but also as our neighbors and as the adults of tomorrow. From that perspective, their needs and their futures are tied to our own. We do indeed have common concerns and shared responsibilities for the future we will jointly construct for each other.

As one considers the dimensions we have proposed in this series, we hope that it is within these contexts, and with understanding of how these factors are played out in your schools and communities, that they be applied.

ESSAY ACTIVITIES

Who Are the "At-Risk" Students of the 1990s?

Why Is There a Need to Focus Especially on At-Risk Students?

What Are the Systematic Barriers for At-Risk Students?

How Do We Construct Effective Educational Environments for All Students?

Who Are the "At-Risk" Students of the 1990s?

Activity: How do you define at-risk students?

This activity can be done with a group of teachers, administrators, students, and community members.

The essay discussed four typical approaches and one new approach for defining students at risk. REVIEW these approaches. Then BRAINSTORM and LIST what you think are the advantages and disadvantages of each with respect to how they will help you address problems of students at risk. Finally, SUMMARIZE your own definition and how it helps you address problems of students at risk.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
predictive approach		
descriptive approach		
unilateral approach		
school factors approach		
New approach: ecological approach (working definition)		

Summarize your definition and how it will help you solve problems of at-risk students.

Why Is There a Need to Focus Especially on At-Risk Students?

Activity: What issues related to at-risk students apply in your school?

This activity can be done with a group of teachers, administrators, students, and community members.

The essay discussed a number of issues that compel special emphasis on students at risk. These are listed below. REVIEW these in the essay, then ADD other issues that are critical for your particular school. BRAINSTORM and WRITE some ways you already address or can address these issues.

Issues	Ways to address
denial of equal access to educational opportunities for at-risk students	
new needs and different circumstances of at-risk students from those schools have dealt with in the past	
economic future of our nation is endangered	
inadequacy of education and the need to reinvest in America's youth	

Issues	Ways to address
shifting responsibilities from institutions that have traditionally addressed problems (e.g., the family) to the school	
belief that blame for school failure lies solely with students and their families	
legal requirement to provide equitable education for all students	
other issues:	

What Are the Systemic Barriers for At-Risk Students?

Activity: How can you eliminate barriers?

This activity can be done with a group of teachers, administrators, students, and community members.

The essay discussed three categories of barriers students at risk commonly experience. With a group, ANALYZE how these barriers apply to your school. Then LIST ways to overcome these barriers and/or BRAINSTORM additional ways to overcome them.

Discrimination and Differential Treatment

How do these barriers apply to your school?

What are some ways to overcome these barriers?

Structural and Programmatic Barriers

How do these barriers apply to your school?

What are some ways to overcome these barriers?

Societal Context - Declining Support For School, Children, Families

How does this barrier apply to your school?

What are some ways to overcome this barrier?

How Do We Construct Effective Educational Environments for All Students?

Activity: How can you restructure the educational environment of your school to promote success?

This activity can be done with a group of teachers, administrators, students, and community members.

USE the ideas in the essay to ANALYZE how well the educational environment in your school addresses the needs of at-risk students. LIST changes you have already made and BRAINSTORM additional changes you can make.

Cultural norms in your school

How well do they meet the needs of at-risk students?

What are some ways your school has changed or can change its cultural norms?

Instructional content, strategies, and priorities

How well do they meet the needs of at-risk students?

What are some ways your school can change instructional content, strategies, and priorities?

Attention to personal and affective needs of students and staff

How does your school attend to student and staff needs?

What are some ways your school can attend to these needs?

Relationships beyond your school

How well do they meet the needs of at-risk students?

What are some ways your school has changed or can change relationships beyond your school?

SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Preparing for Change

Activity 2: Getting Started

Activity 3: Continuing to Grow

Note: The activities in this section are sequenced to address different levels of involvement in the restructuring process. Begin by selecting the activities best suited to your school.

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Activity 1: Preparing for Change

Part A: What are some strategies for helping at-risk students in your school or district?

This activity should be done with a group of teachers, administrators, students, and community members, if possible.

1. In your group, DESCRIBE the at-risk students in your school or district.

2. BRAINSTORM and LIST factors that put these students at risk (e.g., school not responsive to their needs, limited English proficiency, etc.).

3. LIST your school's or district's current strategies for dealing with these factors (e.g., pull-out remediation classes) and ANALYZE how successful they are.

4. Using the information in this guidebook and other information you may have, IDENTIFY those factors that (a) are being or can be addressed within your school or district, (b) require cooperation between the school or district and other institutions, and (c) require other institutions beyond the school. DESCRIBE strategies that your school or district and other institutions use or can use to address these factors.

Part B: How does your school or district ensure successful classroom experiences for at-risk students?

In your group, REVIEW or WRITE (a) your definition of learning, (b) changes you have made or plan to make so that your curriculum is a thinking curriculum, (c) ways you ensure or can ensure that students and teachers collaborate in their classrooms, and (d) multidimensional assessments you have implemented or plan to implement. Then BRAINSTORM special efforts your school has made or will need to make to ensure that at-risk students engage in and achieve such learning.

<u>Special efforts for at-risk students</u>

your definition of learning

thinking curriculum

collaborative classrooms

multidimensional assessments

Activity 2: Getting Started

What will be your plan for dealing with students at risk?

This activity should be done with a group of teachers, administrators, students, and community members, if possible.

Note: In this activity you may want to add to goals and strategies you have already implemented in your school or district.

1. SET GOALS for students at risk in your school or district. Consider both short-term and long-term goals.

2. PLAN for practical issues.

   What specific strategies will you use for achieving your goals?

   What alternate strategies will you use if your first choices are not successful?

   Who will be responsible for carrying out your strategies?

What resources are already available for implementing your strategies and what new resources will you need to obtain?

What other potential problems will you need to overcome (e.g., parent and community support)?

What is your timeline for achieving your goals?

3. PLAN how you will evaluate your efforts.

How will you know that changes you have made truly benefit students at risk?

Activity 3: Continuing to Grow

How successful are your strategies for addressing the needs of at-risk students?

This activity should be done with a group of teachers, administrators, students, and community members, if possible.

If your school or district already has implemented a plan for addressing the needs of at-risk students, you may be well on your way to solving this pressing problem. To evaluate your current efforts, consider the following questions.

1. How successful have you been in overcoming the following barriers to school achievement for at-risk students?

discrimination and differential treatment barriers
(e.g., low expectations, inferior resources)

structural and programmatic barriers
(e.g., inflexible school structure and schedule, tracking and ability grouping, misuse of testing, narrowly defined curriculum and instruction, lack of support services, lack of prevention measures such as early childhood education, lack of democratic governance)

societal barriers
(e.g., declining support of the larger community for schooling and services for youth)

2. How successful have you been in establishing educational environments that are effective for at-risk students?

cultural norms in your school or district

(e.g., broad measures of school success; communication among students, teachers, and parents; involvement of all students in both educational and extra-curricular activities; improved school attendance; integration of special students into the general educational program; use of inclusive language throughout the school; attitude and belief that all students can learn; valuing multicultural education and activities; involvement of the community, including parents, in the school)

curriculum, instruction, and assessment

(e.g., thinking curriculum that is a fusion of content and process; collaboration among students and teachers in classrooms; multidimensional assessment of a broader range of abilities and intelligences)

personal and affective needs of students and staff

(e.g., ensuring students attain and maintain good self-concepts; support teams for school and non-school problems; support for teachers in mediating students' problems)

relationships beyond the school or district

(e.g., school as hub-of-a-network; appropriate allocation of resources, including staff and materials)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Program Descriptions

1. The New Definition of Learning: The First Step for School Reform - The point of departure in thinking about restructuring is to consider a new definition of learning based on recent research in cognitive sciences, philosophy, and multicultural education. Positive attitudes toward learning, toward oneself, and toward others; a strategic approach to learning; and self-regulated learning are key goals emerging from this research. While these perspectives build on earlier approaches to active learning, they are "new" in contrast to traditional models of schooling. Also, it is especially important in our changing and changed society to promote meaningful learning among all students. The vision of meaningful learning developed for a restructured school will determine the curriculum objectives, classroom instruction, assessment, and the social organization of the school.

2. The Thinking Curriculum - If students are to engage in meaningful learning, numerous curricular issues must be addressed. A dual agenda must be implemented focusing both on enriched content and expanded notions of higher order thinking. Otherwise, students will learn isolated skills and facts as ends in themselves. If schools are to become communities of scholars, collaborative learning and the interpersonal skills needed to support it must become part of the curriculum. Activities to develop self-regulated learning and motivation must become part of the curriculum for students of all ages and abilities, but especially for students at risk and younger students. Finally, higher-order thinking and reasoning must pervade the curriculum from K-12.

3. The Collaborative Classroom: Reconnecting Teachers and Learners - If there are profound changes implied from the new definition of learning for what students learn, there are equally serious consequences for the roles of teachers in the classroom. Teachers will need to facilitate, mediate, model, guide, assist, share, listen, and adjust the amount of support provided. Moreover, many teachers will need to develop strategies for teaching diverse students within heterogeneous classrooms.

4. Multidimensional Assessment: Strategies for Schools - If the curriculum is to change, the current debate over the usefulness, or uselessness, of standardized tests is likely to be intensified. It makes little sense to redesign curricula to teach for understanding and reflection when the main assessment instruments in schools measure only the assimilation of isolated facts and effective performance of rote skills. Alternative assessment methods must be developed to evaluate and increase the capacity of learners to engage in higher order thinking, to be aware of the learning strategies they use, and to employ multiple intelligences. Alternative modes of assessment are valuable both to students in promoting their development and to teachers in increasing the effectiveness of their instruction.

5. Schools as Learning Communities - In schools that are learning communities, students' learning and teachers' instruction use the community and its resources. In addition, the schools promote learning as a lifelong activity for all citizens. As a result, community members increasingly spend more time in schools to learn, provide support services such as tutoring and teaching, and participate in school life. More and more, schools of the future will be places where administrators and teachers learn and work collaboratively. Schools as learning communities may also mean working with local businesses and agencies to provide increased support services to help students and their families become better learners.

6. Many Roads to Fundamental Reform in Schools: Getting Started - Teachers and administrators who form learning communities reflect as a group on schooling and learning—they probe their assumptions about learning, they debate what they see as essential in the educational experience, and they build consensus on what vision of learning will undergird their school's mission. Initiating a broad-based dialogue comparing learning that should occur to learning that is actually occurring is a first step in getting started. A broad-based dialogue includes community members, parents, teachers, administrators, and students. In furthering the dialogue, participants should pursue the implications of their new definition of learning for all dimensions of schooling—curriculum, instruction, assessment, school organization, and community relations.

7. Many Roads to Fundamental Reform in Schools: Continuing the Journey - If all participants in this school community are successful learners, then they know that the process of learning is ongoing and iterative. They know that schooling and learning are driving concepts that must be repeatedly developed in their meaning. Participants are continually learning and re-learning what the mission of the school is, what the vision of learning should be, how to realize this vision, and the many subtle ways the vision is impeded by organizational and attitudinal constraints. Formative evaluation of the restructuring process becomes "business as usual" for the school.

8. The Meaning of Professional Development in the 21st Century - Traditional roles of staff development for teachers and principals focusing on one-shot events are as outdated as traditional models of learning. Therefore, a major task of the restructuring movement is to align models of staff development with new visions of learning to allow teachers and administrators to plan together sustained, high-quality staff development programs. Video Conference 8 focuses on developing new roles for teachers and administrators based on research on expert teaching and staff development.

9. Reconnecting Students at Risk to the Learning Process - New visions of learning suggest that students who are academically at risk have been largely disconnected from the process of learning by segregation into poorly coordinated and impoverished remedial programs emphasizing drill on isolated skills. Research indicates that such students can be reconnected to the learning process by training regular classroom teachers to use teaching/learning strategies which are successful for students in heterogeneous classrooms and by providing them with dynamic assessments and highly enriched learning environments. Video Conference 9 highlights successful programs.

Computer Forums

Much of the value and excitement of participating in this video series arises from the opportunity to interact with presenters and share in the national dialogue on restructuring. Indeed, this dialogue is a primary goal of this professional development series. Yet, there is only so much time available to engage in such dialogue during each video conference. To participate in the continuing dialogue after each video conference, viewers can access LEARNING LINK, a computer conferencing system.

This system was developed for public television to increase the impact of distance learning. Using this system, members can:

- **Ask presenters questions** for one month after each video conference
- Talk to each other to **share experiences**, help solve problems, learn about resources, and ask for assistance
- Participate in "**discussion groups**" organized around specific topics such as the thinking curriculum
- **Access calendars** for events related to restructuring and teaching for thinking and understanding
- **Access new information** pertinent to the video series such as news items, alerts, and announcements of new publications
- **Search** user's communications for information and commentary on specific topics such as assessment
- **Survey** what others think about a given issue
- **Access large documents** that NCREL enters into the system (for example, articles and annotated bibliographies)
- **Exchange strategic plans** with others

Who Will Be Available to Address Questions and Comments?

NCREL and PBS have asked the presenters if they, or their staff, can be available for approximately one month after each video conference to answer additional questions. While we do not expect that all of the presenters will be available, we anticipate that there will be some from each conference in the series. A full-time conference moderator will be available from Indiana University at Bloomington. This person will be able to answer questions pertaining to all aspects of restructuring as well as to respond to technical questions and facilitate conference dialogue.

What Do I Need To Use LEARNING LINK?

All you need to apply is a microcomputer (any brand), a modem, and telecommunications software such as Apple Access 2, Apple Works, Procomm, or Red Ryder.

How Much Does LEARNING LINK Cost?

Regular account membership is $189.00 for 20 hours of access to the system. However, **DataAmerica** and **IBM** have partially underwritten the cost. The first 2,500 people to register will pay only $95.00 for 15 hours. Of these special $95.00 memberships, 1,500 will be reserved for persons in the NCREL region. Memberships will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. For information,

phone:	or write:
Erica Marks	IntroLink
IntroLink	Learning Link National Consortium
(212) 560-6868	356 W. 58th St.
9:30-5:30 EST	New York, NY 10019

Note 1: While there may be nominal local connect charges, there will be no additional fees for long distance usage for hours of service purchased. This is true whether you pay $189.00 for 20 hours or $95.00 for 15 hours.

Note 2: Members currently using LEARNING LINK service do not need to apply. They are already eligible to participate in the service for this video series through their local LEARNING LINK system. For information, watch for announcements in your bulletin boards.

Remember: You must already have a microcomputer, a modem, and telecommunications software in order to access LEARNING LINK.

Materials

Video Conference **Guidebooks** include pre- and post-conference activities as well as other activities for various workshops. Activities are customized for different levels of knowledge. Some activities are introductory; others are more advanced. Each downlink site will receive one camera-ready master copy free of charge for local reproduction as part of the licensing arrangement.

Selected Readings include reprints of various articles and other information for each video conference. We have created a flyer, including an order form, for you to distribute. This form can be found at the end of this book. Two volumes of **Selected Readings** will be available for $15.00 each (plus shipping) from:

Zaner-Bloser, Inc.	(800) 421-3018
Customer Service	8:00 am - 4:30 pm EST
1459 King Avenue	Fax: (614) 486-5305
P.O. Box 16764	
Columbus, OH 43216-6764	

Course Credit Information

In the NCREL region (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin), the National College of Education will offer two graduate hours of credit to:

- Groups of students using an approved on-site facilitator
- Individuals employing instructional services by telephone

For more information about credit in the NCREL region, please call Sonja Clary, Associate Dean for Off-Campus Programs, (708) 475-1100, ext. 2335.

In the fall of 1990, PBS Adult Learning Service will offer Restructuring to Promote Learning in America's Schools as a telecourse. For information, please call (800) 257-2578.

Local Involvement

Inside the NCREL Region

NCREL has identified local teams from each of its seven states to assist in implementing the video series. Teams include people in these areas: media, staff development, curriculum and instruction, and rural and urban education. Each team has developed its own implementation plan. Local PBS stations throughout the region will also be a part of the local outreach.

Outside the NCREL Region

You may want to generate activities similar to those in the NCREL region. Some suggestions:

- Your school or agency can provide immediate commentary and analysis at the local site after each video conference.
- Local colleges or universities may use the series as part of course requirements.
- State education agencies and/or other qualified agencies may provide continuing education credits, or equivalent, for participation in the series.
- Local and state education agencies may provide Leadership/Management Academy Workshops, study groups, and/or other workshops using the video series.
- Your school may provide school credits/career advancement for participation.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Bibliography

Video Sources

Organizational Resources

Presenters' Biographical Information

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Video Sources

Asa Hilliard Video produced by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Sheridan County School District 1 Video produced by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Addenda for Video Sources
Video Conference 8--The Meaning of Staff Development in the 21st Century

Jean Conyers Video produced by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL).

Educational Television Network (ETN) Video produced by Los Angeles County Office of Education.

Professional Development Academy produced by The Gheens Foundation, Inc.

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), 295 Emroy Avenue, Elmhurst, IL 60126-2468, (708) 941-7677
Los Angeles County Office of Education, 9300 E. Imperial Hwy., Downey, CA 90242, (212) 922-6668
The Gheens Foundation, Inc., Suite 705, One Riverfront Plaza, Louisville, KY 40202, (502) 473-3319

Organizational Resources

Throughout the past few years, NCREL has been in contact with a number of organizations that focus on restructuring. Each organization would be happy to provide information on its services.

Arkansas Advocates for
Children and Families
931 Donaghey Building
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 371-9678

Advocates for Children of New York
24-16 Bridge Plaza South
Long Island City, NY 11101
(718) 729-8866

Children's Defense Fund
Mississippi Project
Box 1684
Jackson, MS 39205
(601) 355-7495

Citizens' Council for Ohio Schools
453 The Arcade
Cleveland, OH 44114
(216) 261-5220

Intercultural Development
and Research Association
5835 Callagham Road, #350
San Antonio, TX 78228
(512) 684-8180

Kentucky Youth Advocates
2024 Woodford Place
Louisville, KY 40204
(502) 456-2140

Massachusetts Advocacy Center
95 Berkeley Street, Suite 302
Boston, MA 02116
Anne Wheelock: (617) 357-8431

National Black Child
Development Institute
1463 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 387-1281

The National Coalition of
Advocates for Students
100 Boylston Street, #737
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 357-8507

The Student Advocacy Center
420 North Fourth Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(313) 995-0477

Presenters' Biographical Information

William D. Ford

William D. Ford has represented Michigan's 15th Congressional District for over 25 years. As Chairman of the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service since 1981, Congressman Ford has been responsible for the welfare of over three million Federal civilian employees and their families. Congressman Ford is the ranking majority Member of the Committee on Education and Labor. He has helped write every piece of Federal education legislation since the 89th Congress. In the 97th Congress, Ford played a major role in developing the Job Training Partnership Act. Honorary degrees have come to Congressman Ford from Eastern Michigan, Northern Michigan, Central Michigan, and Western Michigan Universities. Ford also holds honorary doctorates from Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, Wayne State University, and the University of Detroit. After attending Wayne State University and Nebraska State Teachers College, Congressman Ford earned a B.S. and J.D. at the University of Denver. He then became a Justice of the Peace in Taylor Township, Michigan. In 1960, Ford was elected to the Michigan Constitutional Convention, and later served in the Michigan State Senate until his election to Congress in 1964.

Richard A. Figueroa

Richard A. Figueroa received his Ph.D. in 1975 from the University of California at Berkeley in Educational Psychology specializing in School Psychology. From 1976 to 1979 he was a member of the California State Advisory Commission on Special Education where he subsequently authored most of the current state regulations on linguistic minority students placed in special education. He is Professor of Education at the University of California at Davis and co-directs a graduate training program in school psychology. His research interests are on the measurement of intelligence with Hispanic bilingual populations and on the special education of "learning handicapped" children. With regard to the former, his recent publications assert that IQ tests may be incapable of predicting academic success for bilingual children. With respect to the latter, he is currently conducting a California-sponsored research project to determine if it is possible to change the existing reductionistic, process teaching system of educating learning disabled Hispanic children to a more enriched, holistic optimal learning environment.

Lynn Hamersley

Lynn Hamersley is Director of Special Programs and the Educational Resource Center, Sheridan County School District #1, and an instructor on special education for the University of Wyoming. He has taught special education resource room programs as a Master Teacher, secondary level, Los Angeles Unified School District. He has been a special education consultant and Program Monitor for the Wyoming State Department of Education. He is the author of several special education manuals, e.g., *A Guide to Assisting Students With Educational Difficulties* and *A Guide to Teaching Learning Disabled Students,* and the author and co-author of seven University of Wyoming course content outlines, e.g., "Teaching The Exceptional Child In The Regular Classroom." He currently is the chairperson of the District/ Community Student At Risk Committee and The District Comprehensive K-12 Health Curriculum Committee. Mr. Hamersley is considered a "pioneer," having been involved in all facets of special education beginning with the development of federal and state laws and teaching the first secondary classroom for learning disabled students in Los Angeles.

Asa Grant Hilliard III

Asa Grant Hilliard III is Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Urban Education, Department of Educational Foundations, Counseling & Psychological Services, and Early Childhood Education, Georgia State University, Atlanta. He received his Ed.D. in Educational Psychology/Teacher Education from the University of Denver. Dr. Hilliard has focused his work on understanding how the culture and organization of the school creates impediments or barriers to learning. His publications include *Public Support for Successful Instructional Practices for At-Risk Students* and *The Nurturance of Communication Development in Young Children: The Scope and Essential Parameters of Cognitive/Communicative Competence* (in press). Dr. Hilliard has also held the positions of Professor and Dean, School of Education, at San Francisco State University. He has also served as a consultant to the Monrovia Consolidated School System in Liberia. Dr. Hilliard has also served on boards of directors or advisory groups for numerous community, state, and national organizations.

Robert Moses

Robert Moses is Founder and Math Educator for the Algebra Project. He is the author of the Algebra Project Transition Curriculum and the principal trainer for the Project. Mr. Moses taught middle school math at the Horace Mann School in New York City from 1958-1961. From 1982 through 1987, Mr. Moses used his MacArthur Fellowship to work full-time on developing the Transition Curriculum and training and supporting teachers in its use. In addition to continuing development of the Algebra Project, Mr. Moses currently serves as a technical consultant to the Urban Schools Science and Mathematics Project of the Academy for Educational Development. He served as Director of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), a group that incorporated all of the major civil rights organizations and agencies working in Mississippi. That experience has held him in good stead as he has developed relationships with and among community organizations, teachers, administrators, and parents. Mr. Moses holds a B.A. from Hamilton College and an M.A. from Harvard University.

Weyman F. Patterson

Weyman F. Patterson is Coordinator of Mathematics for the Atlanta Public Schools in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Patterson plans and implements instructional programs in mathematics and computer science, grades K-12. He is also Director, Mathematics and Science Training Institute, where he coordinates teacher training in science, mathematics, and student support programs in selected middle schools. A curriculum management plan designed by Dr. Patterson resulted in a systemwide increase in basal progress of 55% in mathematics courses grades K-12 for the year 1986-87, the school system exceeding the national average in mathematics on Iowa Test of Basic Skills, 1989-90, and an increase of 36 percentage points on Georgia Basic Skills Test. He also initiated teleconferences as a medium for systemwide in-service of mathematics teachers. Publications include *Preparation for the Georgia Basic Skills Mathematics Test*, *Alternative Strategies for Re-teaching Multiplication in the Middle School*, and a paper presented at a meeting of the College Board, "Are the High Schools Teaching What the Colleges Expect?"

Walter G. Secada

Walter G. Secada is an Assistant of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A Senior Researcher at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, he directs a federally funded bilingual education multifunctional resource center that provides training and technical assistance to school district personnel and parents involved in the education of limited English proficient (LEP) students. His research and scholarly interests focus on equity in education, mathematics education, and bilingual education. Recent efforts include an edited book, *Equity in Education* (Falmer Press); "Research, Politics, and Bilingual Education," in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1990; and "Student Diversity and Mathematics Education Reform," a chapter appearing in *Dimensions of Cognitive Instruction* (edited by Lorna Idol and Beau Fly Jones and published by Lawrence Erlbaum). He has just completed a longitudinal study on the relationship between degree of bilingualism and arithmetic problem solving by first grade Hispanic children.

Cynthia Silva

Cynthia Silva serves as Project Administrator for the Algebra Project where she provides administrative support and grant writing assistance to the Project. She co-authored the *Teacher's Guide to the Transition Curriculum*. In addition to her work with the Algebra Project, she serves as an Associate with Technical Development Association, providing technical assistance to nonprofit organizations. In this capacity, she has assisted organizations in strategic planning, organizational assessment, program evaluation, fund raising strategy development, proposal writing, and uses of information technology in the nonprofit setting. Ms. Silva also has experience in community-based organizations and community organizing. Ms. Silva holds a B.A. in Afro-American Studies and Religion from Harvard-Radcliffe Colleges and a Master of Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government.

Franklin B. Walter

Franklin B. Walter is Superintendent of Public Instruction, Ohio Department of Education. He earned a Ph.D. degree from The Ohio State University. Dr. Walter has served as a lecturer and consultant for many state and national organizations. In addition, he has made a comparative study of educational school systems in European countries, and, on behalf of the State Department, evaluated the American schools in Zaire, Africa. Dr. Walter works closely with administrators, teachers, and board members for the improvement of education and has served on numerous boards and commissions. He has served as education chairman of the United Way Campaign for Columbus and Franklin County, chairman of the United Negro College Fund Public School Campaign for Ohio, and president of the board of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. Dr. Walter has served as president of the Council of Chief State School Officers. Under his leadership, a blueprint for improving public education has been developed and endorsed by the entire education community. He works closely with the Governor and legislative leaders to bring fiscal stability to Ohio's public education system.

Anne Wheelock

Anne Wheelock is Project Leader for the Massachusetts Education Reform Monitoring Project at the Massachusetts Advocacy Center, Boston. She is responsible for advocacy, research, and report writing related to dropout prevention and remediation efforts in Massachusetts middle grades. During her tenure with the Center, she has designed and implemented legal rights and advocacy skills training for parents of children with special needs, coordinated annual statewide conferences on children's rights, trained team leaders for local research, and co-authored a report on the impact of federal budget cuts on children in Massachusetts. Ms. Wheelock is also a Field Instructor for the Wheelock College School of Social Work and Boston University School of Social Work. Her publications include *Before It's Too Late: Dropout Prevention in the Middle Grades*, *The Way Out: Student Exclusion Practices in Boston Middle Schools*, *For Want of a Nail: The Impact of Federal Budget Cuts on Children in Massachusetts*. Ms. Wheelock also edited the manuscript for *Barriers to Excellence: Our Children at Risk*.

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